

2, lines 56-61) Once a policy has been determined for a flow, the remaining packets not seen by the policy application. (col. 5, lines 19-23)

The present invention, on the other hand, is made specifically to do what Lin says should not be done, that is, make policy decisions in hardware at line speeds. This is set forth in the structure of the network processing system as claimed in Claim 1. The present invention, as set out in Claim 1, includes a processing engine communicating with the network interfaces. The processing engine, at network speeds, is able to compare each flow to a database containing network policies, stored in the processing engine itself and determine treatment for each flow based on the policies in the database.

This is distinct from Lin where the determination of policy treatment for the flows and the database of policies themselves are not part of the policy engine, but rather in a completely separate piece of equipment running legacy software applications which do not operate at network speeds. The policy cache of Lin merely holds a predetermined action to take on previously classified flows. The present invention is based on being able to make the policy determinations, and to treat the corresponding flows appropriately at wire speeds. To accomplish this the policy engine and the policy database must be in the network path and operate at network speeds. This is clearly set forth in Claim 1 where the policy engine includes the policy database and operates to make the policy determinations itself.

Since Lin does not show the policy determinations and policy database as part of the policy engine and thus not working at network speeds, and since these limitations are clearly set forth in Claim 1 and therefore, dependent Claims 2-9, Applicant respectfully asserts that Claims 1, 3-5, 7-9 are not anticipated by Lin and requests that the rejection by the Examiner be withdrawn.

Claims 2, 10-15 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lin.

Applicant would reiterate the arguments set forth above since Claim 10 contains the same structure for the network processing system of the present invention. Further, the use of multidirectional engines in Lin is not obvious, again because of the nature of how Lin makes policy determinations. As stated, Lin's policy determinations are made by third party application software running on a separate piece of equipment. Because the policy determination mechanism is outside of the network equipment it would not be obvious to include a second engine to handle data in the opposite direction. The reason the present invention is able to use two unidirectional policy engines for traffic flowing in opposite directions is that each policy engine is able to make policy determinations for traffic flowing through it.

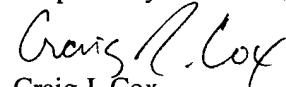
For these reasons and the reasons set forth with respect to Claim 1, Applicant respectfully asserts that Claims 2, 10-15 and 18 are not obvious in view of Lin and requests that the rejection by the Examiner be withdrawn.

Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lin in view of Natarajan (U.S. 6,751,662).

Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejection of Claim 17 as being unpatentable under §103(a). As the claim is dependent on allowable base claim as set forth in Applicant's arguments above, however, the Examiner's rejections are moot and will not be specifically addressed by the Applicant.

Applicant believes in view of the foregoing amendments and arguments that the application is in condition for allowance and respectfully requests such action by the Examiner. If there are any issues, questions, or if the Examiner does not believe the application is in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the number below.

Respectfully submitted,


Craig J. Cox
Reg. No. 39,643

Date: September 24, 2004

Netrake Corporation
3000 Technology Drive
Suite 100
Plano, Texas 75074
(214) 291-1051